

# New Street Trees for Boston

Boston's Green Streets include street trees and front lawn trees. These trees make up part of Boston's Urban Forest.

Can you identify Boston's street trees? If your answer is 'no', you can organize a volunteer street tree inventory for your neighborhood. Volunteers will be trained to identify street trees. If your answer is 'yes', you can organize a tree walk for your neighborhood.

Trees make a valuable contribution to life in the city but they need your care and protection. Trees moderate the effects of climate by providing cooling shade in the summer and allowing sunlight to penetrate in the winter. Trees also cool the air by evaporating moisture through their leaves. Trees help to reduce pollution by filtering out dust, pollen, and smoke. Trees provide food, nesting sites, and shelter for birds and other wildlife. In addition, urban trees allow us to experience nature's processes.

Trees provide excellent quality of life benefits to us but the urban environment provides several stresses for trees, especially for young trees. Heat from our buildings and pavement can cause heat stress. Trees close to these heat sources absorb excess heat and often cannot release it causing the trees to "cook". Trees also undergo water-stress, especially during our hot summer months with no rain. Other stresses include soil compaction, road salt, and vandalism. Trees need your help to stay healthy and thrive.



BOSTON  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

We hope you will care for all your street trees. You can do this by following some simple **do's** and **don'ts** :

## Do's

**Do** water the tree deeply - once per week with 10 gallons of water.

**Do** keep the pit clean of trash, weeds, and dog excrement.

**Do** plant flowers or ground cover, but not grass, in the tree pit.

**Do** provide 2-3" inches of mulch, if you can, in the tree pit but leave an area of bare soil 3" inches in diameter around the trunk.

**Do** report tree sickness or damage by calling (617) 635-PARK.

## Don'ts

**Don't** dump chemicals in the pits, or toxic substances like oils, waste-water, or cleaning solvents.

**Don't** wrap tree trunk or branches with rope or wire.

**Don't** open car doors onto tree trunks.

**Don't** nail signs or chain bicycles to trees.

With just minimal care, your tree will flourish and add beauty to your neighborhood for many years to come.

If you would like to request a street tree, please call us at  
**(617) 635-PARK.**

8-1111-21



Boston's  
**GREEN**  
Streets



Discover the Urban Forest



**Boston Parks & Recreation**  
Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
Justine M. Liff, Commissioner



# Tree Planting Guide

If you are yearning to plant a tree on your front lawn, it is not hard to do. Planting a tree in a front lawn offers a large soil area for healthy tree growth. This section of this pamphlet will give you an overview so you can start adding to Boston's urban forest.

The best time to plant a tree is early spring after the ground thaws or during the fall months before the first frost. Weather rarely makes an 'exact' date but use the following planting dates as a general guide.

**Spring:** April 1 through June 15

**Fall:** October 1 through December 1

Select a tree to fit the site. Then carefully consider location and available space. When choosing your tree, take note of its growing needs- light: full sun or partial sun, or shade and soil: wet or well drained or dry.

Here are some Small to Large Shade Trees that grow well in Boston's environment:

## Small to Medium

(up to 50 feet)

Trazam Serviceberry  
Thornless Hawthorne  
Amur Maple  
Turkish Filbert  
Japanese Tree Lilac  
Purpleleaf Plum  
Hedge Maple  
American Redbud  
American Hornbeam

## Medium to Large

(greater than 50 feet)

Sugar Maple  
Tulip Tree  
Red Maple  
Ginkgo  
Honeylocust  
London Planetree  
Japanese Sophora  
Sweetgum  
Zelkova



## Preparing the Tree Pit

- Call **Dig-Safe** (888) 344-7233 before you plant. Dig-Safe will let you know if there are any underground utility conflicts.
- Dig the tree pit. All pits should be **2-3** times wider than the root spread and should provide ample space. Measure the depth of the rootball, from root flare to bottom of the rootball. Dig the hole to this depth only.
- Provide good quality topsoil or loam. Add one-third peat moss or humus to the soil removed from the hole.

## Place the Tree in the Hole

- Lift the tree by the rootball and center it in the hole.
- Remove as much as you can of the wire, rope, and burlap from the rootball.
- Water slowly as you backfill the hole with soil. This allows the soil to settle and prevents air pockets.
- When roots are covered, tamp the soil firmly but gently.

## Caring for Your Tree

### Mulch

Add **2-3** inches of mulch if possible, but leave a **3** inch circle of bare soil around the root flare. This allows the roots to breathe. Mulch helps to keep weeds from competing with the tree's roots and helps to conserve moisture.

### Water

Provide water. Allow the water to penetrate and drain into the soil.

### Fertilizing

Do not fertilize your newly planted tree the first year. Collect a soil sample and visit your county extension service for soil testing. Apply fertilizer based on your soil test results. Fertilizer should be applied in the early spring before new growth begins, or in the late fall. **Never fertilize in mid- to late summer.**